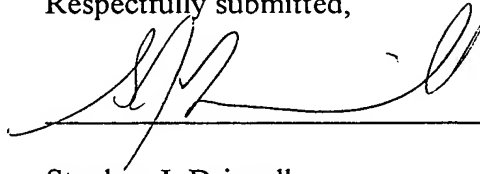


Remarks

Without prejudice, the claims are being amended after allowance to improve clarity and correct typographical errors. Specifically, the term "position" in claims 9, 11, and 13 has been corrected to read "portion." Additionally, the term "transverse axis is being introduced to replace the term "arrangement of sheathed portion." Applicants submit that this amendment adds clarity to the claims by eliminating the ferrule's orientational dependence on the fibers which are not an element of the claims. Although the term is new, the term and its use in the claims is essentially the same as that of "arrangement of sheathed portion." Furthermore, Applicants have eliminated the language directed to "movement regulation means" in claim 9 and 13 since the convex portion is the movement regulation means (see p. 10, line 2 of application) and using both terms in the same claim was confusion. Applicants have also modified the language of the claims in general to improve readability. No new matter has been added.

Respectfully submitted,



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